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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Security Council calls on all States to implement "general and complete embargo" on weapons deliveries to Yugoslavia; urges all parties to abide strictly by cease-fire agreement.

- Secretary-General announces signing of agreement between Government of El Salvador and Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional.

- Secretary-General says he will appeal to Iraqi Foreign Minister for release of members of United Nations inspection team detained in Iraq.

- General Assembly is addressed by President of Venezuela and Foreign Ministers of Germany, China, United Kingdom and Czechoslovakia. President of Haiti, Minister of Education, Culture and Tourism of Nepal, and the Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada also address the Assembly.

- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees begins its biggest land logistics operation to help some 65,000 Iraqi returnee families get through the winter.

- Financial situation of United Nations is "precarious" says Acting Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management speaking at meeting of Fifth Committee.

- Legal Committee begins substantive work of forty-sixth session hearing statements on principles concerning new economic order.

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The Security Council, meeting at a ministerial level this afternoon, has called on all States to implement immediately a "general and complete embargo on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Yugoslavia".

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By the unanimously adopted resolution, sponsored by Austria, Belgium, France, the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom, the Council appealed urgently to and encouraged all parties to settle their disputes peacefully and through negotiation at the conference on Yugoslavia suggested by European States.

It expressed deep concern by the fighting in Yugoslavia which it said was causing heavy loss of human life and material damage, and by the consequences for the countries of the region, particularly those bordering Yugoslavia.

The Council commended the efforts undertaken by the European Community and its member States, with the States participating in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), to restore peace and dialogue in Yugoslavia.

By the resolution, the Council invited the Secretary-General to offer his assistance without delay, in consultation with Yugoslavia, and to report as soon as possible to the Council.

In a statement to the Council, the Federal Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia, welcomed the peace action of the European Community under the auspices of the CSCE. He said this was the second time Yugoslavia was on the Council's agenda. Four decades ago, Yugoslavian sovereign rights to life in peace and to unimpeded development as well as the right to determine its own destiny was in great jeopardy. Now four decades later, Yugoslavia was in conflict with itself, he said.

The Yugoslavian crisis jeopardized not only the present and future of all its peoples, but also peace and stability in Europe. Yugoslavia could no longer be "simply repaired", it should now be "redefined", he said. It was crucial to consolidate the still fragile cease-fire agreed upon a couple of days ago.

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Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar this evening at Headquarters, announced the signing of an agreement between the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN) on the conditions and guarantees for the reintegration into society of the FMLN.

In a statement to the press, the Secretary-General said the goal of the week-long talks had been met and the cease-fire would resume shortly. It was his firm expectation that this agreement would break the deadlock in negotiations. Efforts leading towards agreements on all pending substantive matters and "a brief dynamic cease-fire" would resume shortly, he said.

Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar's announcement came following a series of meetings held in New York between President Alfredo Christiani, delegations of the Government of El Salvador and five commanders of the FMLN, and the Secretary-General and his Personal Representative for Central America, Alvaro de Soto.

Talks will resume on 10 October for 10 days.

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Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar said today that he will make an appeal for the release of the members of the United Nations nuclear inspection team detained yesterday by Iraq, when he meets with Iraqi Foreign Minister Ahmed Hussein later today.

Commenting on the situation as he entered United Nations Headquarters this morning, the Secretary-General said there was no indication that the inspectors are in any danger.

Meanwhile, following Security Council consultations last night, Council President Jean-Bernard Merimee of France issued a statement demanding that the inspection team be immediately allowed to leave the site and to take the documents "they deem appropriate" with them.

The statement said the Council gives its full support to the Special Commission and the inspection team currently in Iraq, and reiterated that the Commission is "the sole judge of the definition of the documents, sites or materials subject to inspection".

The statement expressed full condemnation of the Iraqi authorities for the way in which they have "repeatedly prevented the inspectors from carrying out their duty," and called the detainment of the inspectors "unacceptable".

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Opening the General Assembly's debate this morning, the President of Venezuela, Carlos Andres Perez, called in his address for a move from East-West confrontation to a North-South cooperation that would lead to a single world.

He said it was time to ask both the United States and Cuba to cease their confrontation, which, he said, originated in the context of the cold war. He said that he hoped that Cuba would open itself to the universal concept of democracy and that the United States would be open to dialogue to bring an end to "sanctions that have lost their justification and validity".

German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher spoke to the Assembly this morning for the first time as the Foreign Minister of a united Germany. He said he wanted the European Community to develop into a European union and ultimately into the "united states of Europe", with this year bringing final decision in favour of political union and economic and monetary union.

The German Foreign Minister said he wanted to bring the whole of Europe even closer together, including the peoples of the Soviet Union. He pledged support and assistance to Eastern Europe, saying "no one in the West will be permanently well off if those in the East are permanently bad off".

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He also spoke about Yugoslavia, calling on the Security Council to "adopt a clear, unequivocal position so that the fighting can be stopped". Germany, he said, expected a binding weapons embargo.

In his statement, Foreign Minister of China Qian Qichen welcomed the simultaneous admission by the current General Assembly session of the North and South of Korea as members of the United Nations, saying it was an important event conducive to the relaxation of tension in the Korean Peninsula.

Mr. Qichen also welcomed the Cambodian delegation headed by Prince Sihanouk. He said he believed that a settlement of the Cambodian question would bring about peace and stability in south-east Asia and create a favourable environment for cooperation among all countries in the region.

On the question of the protection of human rights, the Chinese Foreign Minister said that for a long time, the human rights forum of the United Nations had been used by certain countries as a place for waging cold war. For example, he said, "human rights have been used as a means for pushing power politics and interfering in the affairs which are basically within the jurisdiction of other States". He said the Chinese Government had consistently supported and respected the principles of protecting human rights contained in the Charter and the relevant international instruments, and had actively participated in a wide range of human rights activities in the United Nations.

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom, Douglas Hurd, in his statement called the Assembly's attention to the need for all States to apply the principle of transparency in arms transfers.

He said his country had proposed a universal register of arms transfers under United Nations auspices, to alert the international community to an attempt by a country to build up holdings of conventional weapons beyond a reasonable level. He also said that Great Britain would be sponsoring a resolution at this General Assembly, which he hoped would result in the prompt establishment of such a register.

Mr. Hurd drew attention to what he called the "collapse of the principle of empire", saying nationalism was a legitimate expression of people's aspirations and could be dangerous. Referring to the situation unfolding in Yugoslavia, the British Foreign Minister said he hoped the Security Council would add its unique authority to the efforts of the European Community and the CSCE to help the people of Yugoslavia bring an end to the bloodshed and begin a new pattern for the future.

In his statement to the Assembly, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Czechoslovakia, Jiri Dienstbier, spoke about the role of the United Nations now that the cold war had ended and many countries had transformed into democratic States. He noted that the United Nations must be better that the sum of its members. Particular national interests had often been advanced in conflict with common interest. There should be no difference between nations big and small, developed and less developed.

(more)

Mr. Dienstbier went on to say that the General Assembly agenda year after year "stubbornly" featured a variety of prestigious items whose only point was to debate "obsolete" resolutions. There was a need for the Organization to adapt to new requirements and increasing demands put on its activity.

In his afternoon address to the General Assembly, the President of Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, noted that while more than $500 billion were spent annually on arms world-wide, people in his country went hungry because of lack of employment opportunities and lack of human justice. However, he said, the situation in his country had improved considerably since the appointment of a new Government at the beginning of February: the public expenditure had been cut down, the food production was on the rise and, for the first time in a long time, his country showed a surplus budget.

He also indicated that Haiti was making every effort to develop and strengthen its trade and economic relations with the countries from the Caribbean region, as well as with other developing and industrialized nations.

In his statement before the General Assembly this afternoon, Ram Hari Joshi, Minister of Education, Culture and Tourism of Nepal, said his Government placed great value on cooperative relations with the countries in its immediate neighbourhood. He informed the Assembly that Nepal had recently joined in a cooperative venture under the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) to lay the groundwork of an enduring relationship of sincerity and trust among all members.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada, Barbara McDougall, recalled in her statement that her country had been among the first ones to try and design a comprehensive and effective framework dealing with the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Among the number of concrete steps suggested by Canada was the necessity for transparency of international arms sales, particularly by the establishment of a global transfer Register that is universal, non-discriminatory and effective. That Register, she said, should include national inventories as well.

Ms. McDougall also called for the strengthening of the Security Council's capacity to take preventive and anticipatory actions. An ability to assess impending flashpoints, engage the necessary political will at the earliest stage, and act effectively and decisively in timely ways would increase, in her opinion, the lead-time in reacting to events and would reduce the security risk by minimizing the element of surprise. This, she said, could be accomplished within the existing Charter as long as the Secretary-General can continue to play a strong leadership role.

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) began today its biggest land logistics operation, with the departure from Turkey of 2,500 trucks filled with building materials for some 65,000 Iraqi returnee families. The $15 million shelter programme is part of UNHCR's regional plan of action for Iraq and is intended to get people through the freezing winter months.

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According to a press communique issued by UNHCR, only one half of the 640,000 people, still displaced in the north-eastern areas of Iraq, is expected to voluntarily return to their homes. The Agency said it hopes many more will return to Iraq.

The UNHCR reported another winterization programme in Iran, where the first of some 3,300 winterized shelters, capable of housing up to 40,000 people, will be completed by early November. The Agency said that from the exodus of some 1.4 million Iraqis into Iran earlier this year, only 70,000 refugees still remained in camps.

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The cash flow of the United Nations was "precarious", said Richard Foran, Acting Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, in a statement yesterday, as the General Assembly's Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) began its substantial work for the forty-sixth session.

Mr. Foran attributed the critical situation to the fact that the Organization has been asked to take on more tasks in 1991 than ever before. He urged delegates of countries that had not yet paid to ask their Governments to amend that matter.

In addition to taking up the proposed programme budget of the United Nations for the biennium 1992-1993, and to elaborating a new scale of assessments for apportioning the expenses of the Organization among Member States, the Committee this year will also consider personnel questions, the financing of peace-keeping operations and missions and the administrative and financial efficiency of the United Nations.

The Committee elected Kees Spaans (Netherlands) and Norma Goicochea (Cuba) as Vice-Chairmen, and Mahmoud Barimani (Iran) as Rapporteur.

The Chairman of the Committee, Ali Sunni Muntasser (Libya), was elected on 17 September.

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The Sixth Committee (Legal) began its substantive work this morning hearing statements on the progressive development of the principles and norms of international law relating to the new international economic order.

The Chairman, Pedro Comissario Afonso (Mozambique), noting a dwindling interest in the topic, urged that the Committee either take action on the item or postpone its consideration.

Among those making a statement at the meeting, the representative of Tanzania, Jerry E. J. Mburi, said that in the present international climate, economic divisions threatened to supplant ideological ones. The gap between developed and developing countries continued to widen and a lack of political will on the part of major Western Powers lay behind that phenomenon, he said.

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